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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor's Keyboard           "Saying it like it is!"
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Another one of those long weeks, but overall, a good one. I started back at the golf course this week; and it was good to be back working there. There's something about working outdoors that's appealing. Granted, I would have preferred being out during some nice sunny days in shorts and a t-shirt rather than bundled up during cloudy and rainy weather, but we can't have everything! Not sure how long I'll stay with this, though, because one of our three dogs requires a lot of supervision and we're not sure my being gone during the day will end up working out. We'll see how it goes, though.

Hopefully, next month I'll finally get some relief from some long-time nagging back and leg pains. I go in for a spinal cortisone injection that is supposed to relieve some pressure on the degenerative areas within some of my vertebrae. These injections are usually 60% effective, so I'm hoping for the best.

I'm going to keep things short this week because I'm actually fairly on time getting an issue out for a change!

Until next time...

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - No Date Yet for PlayStation Network!
    "***** Sony Knew Software Was Obsolete!
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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

Sony To Restore PlayStation Network by End of May

Sony said Tuesday it aims to fully restore its PlayStation Network, shut down after a massive security breach affecting over 100 million online accounts, by the end of May.

Sony also confirmed that personal data from 24.6 million user accounts was stolen in the hacker attack last month. Personal data, including credit card numbers, might have been stolen from another 77 million PlayStation accounts, said Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. spokesman Satoshi Fukuoka.

He said Sony has not received any reports of illegal uses of stolen information, and the company is continuing its probe into the hacker attack. He declined to give details on the investigation.

Sony shut down the PlayStation network, a system that links gamers worldwide in live play, on April 20 after discovering the security breach. The network also allows users to upgrade and download games and other content.

Sony was under heavy criticism over its handling of the network intrusion. The company did not notify consumers of the breach until April 26 even though it began investigating unusual activity on the network since April 19.

Last month, U.S. lawyers filed a lawsuit against Sony on behalf of lead plaintiff Kristopher Johns for negligent protection of personal data and failure to inform players in a timely fashion that their credit card information may have been stolen. The lawsuit seeks class-action status.

Fukuoka declined to comment on the lawsuit.

Sony: No Date Yet for PlayStation Network Return

Sony Corp said it would take at least "a few more days" to restore service to its online PlayStation Network, which was breached by hackers in one of the largest Internet break-ins of all time.

In a new statement posted on Sony's PlayStation blog on Tuesday, Sony spokesman Patrick Seybold said: "I know you all want to know exactly when the services will be restored. At this time, I can't give you an exact date, as it will likely be at least a few more days."

The online gaming service has been offline since April 19 when Sony noticed unauthorized activity on the servers. Sony has said that the personal information of more than 100 million users had been breached, on the PlayStation Network as well as through other online games services. It said it could not rule out that some 12.3 million credit-card numbers had been stolen during the hacking.

Sony Knew Its Software Was Obsolete Months Before PSN Breach

In congressional testimony this morning, Dr. Gene Spafford of Purdue University said that Sony was using outdated software on its servers - and knew about it months in advance of the recent security breaches that allowed hackers to get private information from over 100 million user accounts.

According to Spafford, security experts monitoring open Internet forums learned months ago that Sony was using outdated versions of the Apache Web server software, which "was unpatched and had no firewall installed." The issue was "reported in an open forum monitored by Sony employees" two to three months prior to the recent security breaches, said Spafford.

Spafford made his comments in a hearing convened by the House Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade. Sony was invited to participate in the hearing, but declined to attend. In a letter to the committee, Sony said it has added automated software monitoring and enhanced data security and encryption to its systems in the wake of the recent security breaches.

"If Dr. Spafford's assessment is accurate, it's inexcusable that Sony not only ran obsolete software on servers containing confidential data, but also that the company continued to do so after this information was publicly disclosed," said Jeff Fox, Consumer Reports Technology Editor.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

White House Unveils Cyber-Security Plan

The White House on Thursday unveiled a cyber-security proposal that it hopes Congress will use as a framework for legislation.

Among other things, the plan includes national data breach reporting, increased penalties for computer crimes, rules that would allow the private sector to commiserate with the Department of Homeland Security on cyber-security issues, and cyber-security audits for critical infrastructure providers.

"Our Nation is at risk. The cybersecurity vulnerabilities in our government and critical infrastructure are a risk to national security, public safety, and economic prosperity," the White House said in a statement. "The Administration has responded to Congress' call for input on the cybersecurity legislation that our Nation needs, and we look forward to engaging with Congress as they move forward on this issue."

The proposal comes at the request of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and six Senate committee chairs, who asked President Obama for his input on cyber-security legislation. Two years ago, Obama designated cyber security as a national security priority.

The plan has four components: protecting American citizens; protecting

critical infrastructure; protecting the federal government's computer systems; and protecting civil liberties.

First up, the White House recommends national data reporting instead of a patchwork of state laws. At this point, 47 states have laws that require companies to inform consumers if a hacker has gained access to their personal information; like Sony or Epsilon, for example. The White House proposal would have all companies in all states adhere to one law in the interest of simplicity.

Second, the plan sets mandatory minimum sentences for cyber intrusions into critical infrastructure. All too often, penalties for computer crimes are not synched up with other criminal statutes.

"For example, a key tool for fighting organized crime is the Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO). Yet RICO does not apply to cyber crimes, despite the fact that cyber crime has become a big business for organized crime," the White House said.

The administration also tackled information sharing between the public and private sector. Sometimes, companies that have been hacked will ask DHS for its assistance, but there are no clear rules that establish DHS's authority in these matters. The proposal would allow DHS to step in quickly and assist, while clarifying what type of help it can provide.

Similarly, the plan would allow businesses or local governments to share information with the federal government about computer viruses or other cyber threats they have uncovered.

"To fully address these entities' concerns, it provides them with immunity when sharing cybersecurity information with DHS," the White House said. "At the same time, the proposal mandates robust privacy oversight to ensure that the voluntarily shared information does not impinge on individual privacy and civil liberties."

The White House plan mentions critical infrastructure quite a bit, but what does that actually mean? Under the proposal, DHS would work with industry players to identify core critical-infrastructure operators, who would get top priority and protection in the event of a cyber attack. In turn, they would have to develop cyber-security plans, which would be evaluated by an outside auditor. If their plans are insufficient, DHS can step in with its own suggestions.

Meanwhile, the plan would formally designate DHS as the agency heading up cyber-security issues for the feds. It would also streamline the process by which Internet service providers obtain immunity for blocking attacks against government computers.

On the privacy front, the White House plan calls on DHS to work with privacy and civil liberties groups to make sure rights are being respected.

"Taken together, these requirements create a new framework of privacy and civil liberties protection designed expressly to address the challenges of cybersecurity," the White House said.

Legislation that would allow Internet users to opt out of having personal data collected has again been introduced on Capitol Hill, becoming at least the fourth bill to focus on consumers' online privacy.

Senator Jay Rockefeller introduced a bill on Monday that would require companies to refrain from collecting information about people who ask not to be tracked. Providers would be able to collect information needed to provide a service - like ship a package - but would have to anonymize or delete it as soon as the service had been performed.

"I believe consumers have a right to decide whether their information can be collected and used online. This bill offers a simple, straightforward way for people to stop companies from tracking their movements online," said Rockefeller in a statement. Rockefeller chairs the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

One recent privacy brouhaha arose from the revelation that Apple iPhones collected location data even when that activity was supposed to have been disabled.

Further, Sony Corp reported a breach last month that exposed personal data of more than 100 million of its online video game users. Sony has said it could not rule out that some 12.3 million credit card numbers had been obtained during the hacking.

Privacy advocates argue that companies that collect and store personal data expose the data to possible theft, particularly when they do not delete it when they don't need it.

Three other online privacy bills have been introduced - by Representatives Bobby Rush and Jackie Speier and by Senators John McCain and John Kerry. It's far too early to tell which, if any, of the four might become law.

US in New Push To Break China Internet Firewall

The United States plans to pump millions of dollars into new technology to break through Internet censorship overseas amid a heightened crackdown on dissent in China, officials said Tuesday.

State Department officials said they would give 19 million dollars to efforts to evade Internet controls in China, Iran and other authoritarian states which block online access to politically sensitive material.

Michael Posner, the assistant secretary of state in charge of human rights, said funding would support cutting-edge technology that acts as a "slingshot" - identifying what countries are trying to censor and throwing it back at them.

"We're responding with new tools. This is a cat-and-mouse game. We're trying to stay one step ahead of the cat," Posner said.

The announcement came shortly after the United States and China wrapped up wide-ranging annual talks in which Secretary of State Hillary Clinton showed exasperation at Beijing's intensifying clampdown on domestic critics.

China routinely blocks sites that present non-official viewpoints on Tibet's exiled leader the Dalai Lama, the banned Falungong spiritual movement and the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy protesters.

More recently, Chinese authorities blocked search results for "Hillary Clinton" after she gave a speech championing Internet freedom and for "Jasmine," an allusion to pro-democracy uprisings sweeping the Arab world.

"In effect, we're going to be redirecting information back in that governments have initially blocked," Posner said.

"This can be done through email or posting it on blogs or RSS feeds or websites that the government hasn't figured out how to block," he said.

The funding comes out of \$30 million which the US Congress allocated in the current fiscal year for Internet freedom.

The failure until now to spend the money led to accusations that the State Department was too worried about upsetting China. A recent Senate committee report called for another government body to be put in charge of the funds.

The Falungong developed the so-called Global Internet Freedom Consortium, a software to evade China's Internet firewall that was so effective that Iranians sought it out during 2009 protests against the clerical regime.

Posner said that the State Department would not identify the recipients of funding due partly to "reasons of security."

Posner said that the State Department was also funding research and training on Internet freedom, with some 5,000 activists already receiving tips on digital safety.

Amazon Could Cut Ties in More States Over Tax Dispute

Amazon.com could cut its partnership with affiliates in more U.S. states that require the online retailer to collect sales tax, Chief Executive Jeff Bezos said on Wednesday.

The comments from the world's largest online retailer come less than a month after brick-and-mortar rival Best Buy expressed optimism about potential online taxation reforms that would expand the collection of sales taxes on items bought over the Internet.

Many traditional chains such as Best Buy and Sears have openly voiced their concerns about online-only retailers like Amazon getting an unfair advantage by not having to collect sales tax in states where it does not have a corporate presence.

Lawmakers in states - many facing huge budget deficits - have also argued that Amazon has a duty to collect tax because its "affiliates," or independent Web operators which are paid a fee when they drive traffic to Amazon that results in a sale, operate in the state.

Amazon has already announced plans to cancel its affiliate program in

Illinois in response to the state's new law to target online retailers that have affiliates in the state.

Texas is considering taxing online sales and California, which already passed legislation that was vetoed, is considering another bill. Last October, Amazon also got a \$269 million bill for uncollected sales taxes from the state of Texas.

"We will continue to drop states who pass those affiliate laws, from the affiliate program," Bezos said at the ShopSmart Shopping Summit in New York on Wednesday.

"In the U.S., the constitution prohibits states from interfering in interstate commerce," Bezos said, citing a U.S. Supreme Court case decades ago that clarified that "mail order" companies could not be required to collect sales tax in states where they did not have "nexus."

Bezos said the issue highlighted the need to simplify the existing sales tax system.

"The sales tax collection is very complicated," Bezos said. "The right place to fix this is with federal legislation."

Google-Powered Laptops To Go on Sale June 15

The first laptops running on a Google-designed software system will go on sale in the U.S. and six other countries next month.

The June 15 release date announced Wednesday means the lightweight laptops will hit the market nearly two years after Google Inc. began working on an operating system based on its Chrome Web browser.

Since then, Apple Inc.'s iPad and other tablet computers have become hot sellers. The growing popularity of tablets has raised questions about how interested consumers will be interested in buying Google-powered laptops specifically tailored for Web surfing.

Samsung Electronics Co. and Acer Inc. are making the first Chromebooks. They will sell for \$349 to \$499 at Best Buy and Amazon.com Inc. in the U.S. The cheapest iPad sells for \$499.

Acer's Chromebook, at \$349, will have an 11.6-inch screen display and up to six hours of battery life. Samsung's version, selling for \$429 to \$499, will have a 12.1-inch screen and up to 8.5 hours of battery life. Both models will have keyboards, but no hard drives for storage. The machines will be like computer terminals dependent on a connection to the Internet. The laptops come with 16 gigabytes of flash memory - the kind found in smartphones, tablet computers and some iPods. They have slots to plug in other storages device you buy separately.

The Chromebooks also will be sold in Britain, France, Germany, Netherlands, Italy and Spain.

In an effort to get people to use Chromebooks, Google is offering three-year subscription plans to businesses and schools similar to how the mobile phone industry subsidizes devices up front and make the money back over the life of a service contract. For a monthly cost of \$28 per

user in businesses and government agencies and \$20 per user in schools, Google provides the laptop, tech support and a warranty for the duration. Google will replace the Chromebooks at the end of the three years.

Chromebook's long-awaited debut will intensify Google's competition with Microsoft Corp., whose Windows operating system remains the foundation of most personal computers.

Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin have long felt that Windows computers took too long to power up and were too clunky to operate. They believed that Windows' drawbacks were discouraging people from spending even more time online, where they could click on ads sold by Google.

To address the perceived problem, Google announced its plans in July 2009 for a Chrome-based operating system that would enable computers to turn on in a matter of seconds and encourage more Web surfing.

"The complexity of managing computers is really frustrating for users out there," Brin told reporters Wednesday at Google's conference for software developers. "It's a flawed model."

Brin, who began focusing on special projects earlier this year, said he didn't have enough information to comment on a Justice Department investigation into the online ad system that generates most of Google's revenue. The company disclosed Tuesday that it has set aside \$500 million to settle the probe. It provided few details.

Besides attacking Microsoft's Windows franchise, Google's Chromebook also will represent another challenge to Apple, which makes Mac computers as well as iPads. Google and Apple have been engaged in a fierce competition in the smartphone market for the past two years.

Google itself has joined the tablet computer craze by creating a special version of its Android software for mobile devices. Apple sold nearly 20 million iPads during the tablet's first year on the market. and analysts expect people to buy tens of millions more tablets from Apple and other manufacturers during the next few years.

Firefox 4 Adoption Tops XP-Skipping Internet Explorer 9

Mozilla has reported a sharp rise in Firefox 4 downloads since offering an update to all users of older versions. As a result, Firefox 4's global market share rose more than 3.5 percentage points, Mozilla's Firefox Community Coordinator Asa Dotzler says.

By contrast, Microsoft's new Internet Explorer 9 browser, which rolled out ahead of Firefox 4, held just more than a four percent market share, according to the latest figures cited by Mozilla. What's more, Dotzler doesn't expect IE9 to catch up with Firefox 4 anytime soon - despite Microsoft's rollout of IE9 as part of its Windows Update service.

"It will be a year or two before they can move the bulk of their IE7 and IE8 users forward," Dotzler wrote in a blog. "So today - and for the foreseeable future - Microsoft will be number three in terms of usage among the modern browsers."

IE9's inability to keep pace with Firefox 4 - at least in the short run - is due in large part to Microsoft's decision to limit the new browser's compatibility to PCs running Windows Vista and Windows 7. By contrast, Firefox 4 is compatible with PCs equipped with Windows XP, Vista and Windows 7, as well as Apple's Mac OS and Linux.

Given that more than half of all PCs worldwide are still running Windows XP, Dotzler said abandoning the software giant's largest group of users was a poor decision. "It's a shame for the hundreds of millions of users they've left behind who could get huge benefits from HTML5 and the modern web -- even without hardware acceleration, [which is] something all the other browser vendors are going to provide," Dotzler wrote.

StatCounter's latest data indicates Firefox 4 held a global market share of 11.41 percent during the first nine days of May, while IE9's share stood at 3.82 percent. By contrast, the new Chrome 11 browser had a 14.2 percent share at the end of the same period, according to the Dublin-based web-metrics firm.

The latest numbers for Firefox 4 are a big step up from the 5.3 percent market share that Net Applications reported in April. Moreover, data from the U.S.-based web-metrics firm indicated IE9 held just a 2.41 percent market share at the end of last month.

On Windows 7 machines, however, IE9 doubled its usage share from 3.6 percent in March to 7.5 percent in April, according to Net Applications. Yet even on PCs running Windows 7, Firefox 4 held an even higher 8.4 percent share in April - though the U.S. firm did note that IE9's daily usage share on Windows 7 machines reached 9.95 percent worldwide on the final day of last month.

Meanwhile, however, Internet Explorer continued to lead the browser field overall with a 55.11 percent global market share in April, based on Net Applications' data. Mozilla's Firefox browser was a distant second with a 21.63 percent share.

Some industry observers see Chrome as the greater long-term threat to Firefox's market standing - especially now that Google has launched a U.S. TV ad campaign touting its browser. However, Dotzler thinks Chrome is a nice browser that is "doing good things for the web" and isn't worried about the competition.

Free 'Browser in a Box' Runs Firefox 4 with Ultra Security

Security is an oft-debated topic in the ongoing browser wars, but there's no denying that malware is a common problem for all of the leading contenders.

A new solution launched this week by German Sirrix AG, however, uses Firefox 4, Linux and virtualization to create what it calls a "browser in a box" that keeps all malware isolated and out of the user's main operating system.

Originally created at the request of the German federal government, BitBox (short for "browser in the box") runs on Windows XP, Vista and Windows 7 as well as Debian Linux, Ubuntu, OpenSUSE and Gentoo, allowing users to

surf the Web worry-free, Sirrix says.

BitBox's security derives from the fact that the browser runs in a virtualized environment using VirtualBox 4.04 and a hardened implementation of Debian 6 Linux. The included browser - Firefox 4 - then runs in a separate virtual machine with its own operating system, keeping it completely separate from the rest of the user's system.

Unlike the simple sandboxing system of standard browsers, in other words, BitBox runs a completely separate guest operating system and keeps all browser activity isolated and away from the base operating system.

Downloads, cut-and-paste capabilities and printing are all kept secure; only a shared folder is in the base operating system, accessible through a separate user account. Uploads, meanwhile, are not enabled, nor is Internet access through the base operating system.

Perhaps best of all, each time the browser is restarted, it gets reset to a certified boot image, thereby eliminating any malware that might have gotten through in the previous session.

For users, BitBox is designed to feel no different from any standard use of Firefox 4. The software is available for free download by individual users and requires no special expertise to install, Sirrix says. It's also available on DVD.

An extended enterprise version for centrally managed IT environments, meanwhile, offers additional features for a fee. In corporate settings, for instance, a tunnel between the BitBox browser and a central Internet gateway is transparently integrated, thereby ensuring a reliable separation between the Internet and the corporate intranet.

Client applications, then, can access only the internal corporate network, for example, while BitBox is tunneled to the outside and can access only Internet information in isolation.

A central management system, meanwhile, offers a simple way to manage security policies, configurations, certification and distribution.

I couldn't find any indication of BitBox's enterprise pricing, but have written them to find out and will post any updates. Meanwhile, if security is paramount in your business, this could be a browser to try out.

Facebook Ramps Up Log-In Security

Facebook on Thursday announced a new, two-factor authentication system whereby the social-networking site will require users to enter a code they receive via text message.

The system, dubbed Login Approvals, will prevent users from signing in unless they can provide that code and authenticate their device.

"As more individuals and businesses turn to Facebook to share and connect with others, people are looking to take more control over protecting their account from unauthorized access," Facebook said in a blog post.

If you opt into Login Approvals, you'll see a pop-up message upon sign-in that says "Confirm your phone." You should then receive a text message with a specific code, which you enter into a box on the pop-up message. If you don't want to do this every single time you sign on, you can designate your smartphone, PC, or tablet as a trusted device and Facebook will allow you to sign in without the text code.

If, however, Facebook sees that someone has signed into your account from an unrecognized device, it will send you an alert and allow you to change your password. So even if someone obtained your login ID and password, they couldn't "access your account and cause any harm," Facebook said.

If you lose or forget your phone, meanwhile, you can still authorize your account, provided you're accessing it from a trusted device.

Facebook acknowledged that it's sometimes difficult to balance security and usability. The company has pondered stronger authentication requirements like apps or physical tokens, but is not ready to add them just yet.

"These are good approaches, and we're considering incorporating them in the future, but they require a lot from the user before being able to turn on the feature," Facebook said. "To have the biggest impact and provide this added security to the most people, we decided on SMS as the best choice for a second factor."

Facebook first mentioned two-factor authentication last month, but is rolling it out more formally today. To enable, select "Login Approvals" from the "Account Security" section of the account settings page.

Facebook also recently expanded its encryption options. In January, Facebook introduced the option to encrypt your Facebook session at all times, known as HTTPS. Now, if you start using a non-HTTPS application on Facebook, it will automatically switch your session back to HTTPS when you're finished.

Microsoft Apologizes for Email Glitch

After a series of glitches causes a massive email backlog, Microsoft has posted a detailed explanation and apology for the problems with the cloud-based Microsoft Exchange subscription service.

As a result of the backlog, some messages were delayed as long as nine hours, while another separate issue with Outlook Web Access raised issues with Exchange ActiveSync devices.

"On Tuesday and today we experienced three separate service issues that impacted customers served from our Americas data center," explained Dave Thompson, corporate vice president of Microsoft Online Services. "All of these issues have been resolved and the service is now running smoothly. These incidents were unique to BPOS and not related to Office 365 or any other Microsoft services."

If you're gleaning a defensive tone, it's not without merit. Last week Office Live customers were having trouble accessing the cloud-based service.

While Office Live is expected to stay online, Office 365 will replace Microsoft's Business Productivity Online Suite (BPOS) - the service affected today - as well as Office Live Small Business and Live@edu.

Despite excitement surrounding Office 365, the site is off to a shaky start. Two days after the public release of the beta, community forums lit up with technical questions and complaints, most pertaining to SharePoint Online, Lync interoperability with Mac, and Exchange mobile syncing.

To its credit, Microsoft has handled the latest cloud-based turbulence with detail and humility. About this week's email backlog, Thompson added: "I'd like to apologize to you, our customers and partners, for the obvious inconveniences these issues caused. We know that email is a critical part of your business communication, and my team and I fully recognize our responsibility as your partner and service provider."

Facebook Loses Much Face In Secret Smear On Google

Facebook secretly hired a PR firm to plant negative stories about Google, says Dan Lyons in a jaw dropping story at the Daily Beast.

For the past few days, a mystery has been unfolding in Silicon Valley. Somebody, it seems, hired Burson-Marsteller, a top public-relations firm, to pitch anti-Google stories to newspapers, urging them to investigate claims that Google was invading people's privacy. Burson even offered to help an influential blogger write a Google-bashing op-ed, which it promised it could place in outlets like The Washington Post, Politico, and The Huffington Post.

The plot backfired when the blogger turned down Burson's offer and posted the emails that Burson had sent him. It got worse when USA Today broke a story accusing Burson of spreading a "whisper campaign" about Google "on behalf of an unnamed client."

Not good.

I've been patient with Facebook over the years as they've had their privacy stumbles. They're forging new ground, and it's not an exaggeration to say they're changing the world's notions on what privacy is. Give them time. They'll figure it out eventually.

But secretly paying a PR firm to pitch bloggers on stories going after Google, even offering to help write those stories and then get them published elsewhere, is not just offensive, dishonest and cowardly. It's also really, really dumb. I have no idea how the Facebook PR team thought that they'd avoid being caught doing this.

First, it lets the tech world know that Facebook is scared enough of what Google's up to to pull a stunt like this. Facebook isn't supposed to be scared, ever, about anything. Supreme confidence in their destiny is the way they should be acting.

Second, it shows a willingness by Facebook to engage in cowardly behavior in battle. It's hard to trust them on other things when we know they'll engage in these types of campaigns.

And third, some of these criticisms of Google are probably valid, but it

doesn't matter any more. The story from now on will only be about how Facebook went about trying to secretly smear Google, and got caught.

The truth is Google is probably engaging in some somewhat borderline behavior by scraping Facebook content, and are almost certainly violating Facebook's terms and conditions. But many people argue, me included, that the key data, the social graph, really should belong to the users, not Facebook. And regardless, users probably don't mind that this is happening at all. It's just Facebook trying to protect something that it considers to be its property.

Next time Facebook should take a page from Google's playbook when they want to trash a competitor. Catch them in the act and then go toe to toe with them, slugging it out in person. Right or wrong, no one called Google a coward when they duped Bing earlier this year.

You've lost much face today, Facebook.

More Parents Lenient About Young Web Use

Despite age restrictions on some social media sites, the number of U.S. parents who would allow children 10-12 years old to have a Facebook or MySpace account has doubled in a year, a new survey showed.

Seventeen percent of U.S. parents questioned in the poll said they had no problem with a pre-teen child using a social media site, compared to just eight percent a year ago.

And 11 percent of parents admitted to using social media sites on behalf of a young child or infant, according to the online survey of about 1,000 adults by Liberty Mutual's Responsibility Project.

"More and more parents are allowing their children to have a Facebook account or to have more online activity at younger and younger ages," said Janet Taylor.

The clinical instructor of psychiatry at Columbia University at Hospital in New York described the findings as a sign of the times.

"It's not alarming. I think it means we need to be aware of what is going on and how to best utilize social media," she added in an interview.

Most parents think that children under 18 should not be able to keep their account to themselves and a third monitor their usage. Forty-four percent also limit the time spent on the Internet or texting.

Facebook, which has 500 million active users, was the most popular social network among adults in the poll. Nearly 90 percent used it frequently, followed at a very distant second by the professional website LinkedIn with 6 percent, Twitter and MySpace.

Although only three percent of people questioned said they used the microblogging site Twitter frequently, they had definite ideas about what was acceptable and what was not.

Nearly two-thirds thought it was unacceptable for the staff of celebrities and CEOs to ghost-tweet for them and 46 percent didn't think

celebrities should use Twitter to argue with each other.

Twenty seven percent also did not agree with CEOs tweeting about their company.

Most Twitter users follow their friends and celebrities and tweet about their daily activities or current events. Only four percent tweeted about politicians or a religious leader, while 11 percent tweeted about their own achievements and 8 percent used it to criticize other people.

When questioned about cyberbullying, most parents said they thought it was their responsibility to resolve the situation if their child was a victim and 63 percent thought teachers and schools should be doing more to stop it.

Apple I, Bought at Christie's for \$200K, Restarted in Italy

Macitynet was reporting on Tuesday that a university in Turin, Italy has brought an Apple 1 back to life. The Apple 1 was a limited edition computer, with about 200 made prior to Apple's founding in 1977. After the company was founded, the original Apple 1 computers were accepted as trade-ins for the Apple II, so few survive today. The number 82 model, bought at Christie's auction for over \$200,000 by Italian collector Marco Boglione, was the Apple restarted today.

The restart was held at Politecnico Main Hall in Turin's Politecnico di Torino university, and went well, despite the motherboard's 35-year-old transistors. The demonstration ran a simple basic program, displaying the words "Hello Polito" honoring the Politecnico di Torino.

The original Apple-1 was sold as a fully assembled circuit board with 4KB of memory but no case, power supply, keyboard or monitor. The No. 82 model had a Rockwell plastic CPU instead of the original 6502 White Ceramic part.

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